



Foggy Bottom News

Published for and by the citizens of Foggy Bottom

November 1984

Volume 29, No. 8

SOME KUDOS FROM STEVE LEVY

PRESERVATION PROJECT COORDINATOR FOR THE FBA AND ANC2a

During the course of the last twelve months of work on historic preservation, I have had the opportunity to work with many outstanding individuals who have volunteered an extensive amount of time toward one or more of our ongoing preservation projects. Although my description of their efforts does not do full justice to them, these people, some of whom have volunteered on other ANC and FBA projects as well, include:

- Debby Shacter, our computer consultant, designed the data system used in the ANC office to store and access preservation information. While I sometime have trouble making our computer go from A to B, Debby handled that computer as if she were Artur Rubenstein at the piano. Debby, a professional computer consultant as is her husband, can be reached on 298-6467.

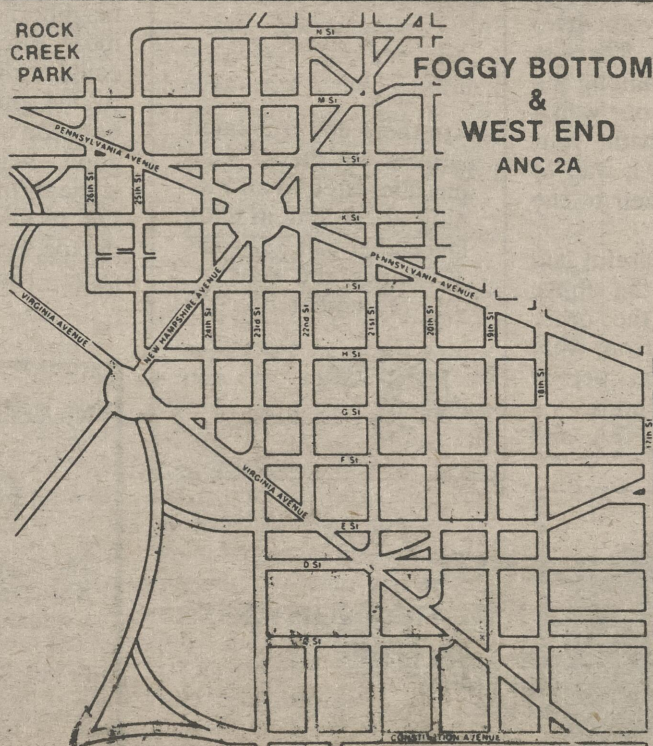
- Richard Price spent many long hours in the ANC office inputting our preservation data and making certain it made sense. While we still have more data to input, it's nice knowing that someone will spend the time to make sure that the information can be used by the public.

- Emily Eig, our preservation consultant at Traceries, has always been willing to volunteer hours far beyond those she was supposed to put in. We have seen Emily at so many of our meetings, that I would gladly nominate her as "Honorary Permanent Guest Speaker." Emily has even done extensive research on individual houses as a fundraiser for the FBA Auction. Elise Quasebarth and Judith Robinson, also of Traceries, similarly volunteered extensive time to aid in our many preservation projects. Traceries can be reached on 462-0333.

- Lois Zuckerman, Ellie Becker and Geoff Stamm have reviewed and rewritten volumes of our draft reports and have put up with, and met, my unreasonably short deadlines.

- Jenny Brake, Isabella Geppert, Nori Uchida and Tom Miller put in many hours of effort contacting owners and residents on Square 14.

- To all of these folks and the many other people who have made contributions to our historic preservation efforts, my thanks for a job well done.



Foggy Bottom Association Meeting

MONDAY,
DECEMBER 3, 1984
8:00 PM

Guest Speaker:
**COUNCILMAN
JOHN WILSON**

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Summary of the Speech by Ann Witt Hoey at October Meeting of the Foggy Bottom Association

by Lois Zuckerman

Ann Witt Hoey, Administrator of Public Space Maintenance for the D.C. Department of Public Works (DPW), was first in the 1984-1985 Foggy Bottom Association Speakers Series. Mayor Barry and the District Council created the DPW on March 2, 1984. The DPW now performs the functions of the former Departments of Transportation and Environmental Services and certain functions of the former D.C. Department of General Services. The new agency consists of the Public Space Administration (headed by Ms. Hoey), the Transportation Systems Administration, the Water and Sewer Utility Administration, and the Fleet Management Administration. Ms. Hoey commends the reorganization for bringing District maintenance services under the umbrella of a single government agency.

Ms. Hoey believes that the District must deliver credible services. She aims to establish predictable schedules for the delivery of services to maintain public space. For example, she intends to schedule regular times for street and alley cleaning. Letting people know the other responsibilities of her office, such as leaf collection, is Ms. Hoey's next priority. A list of telephone numbers to call for both making complaints and receiving information, which Ms. Hoey distributed at the meeting, appears below and is a step toward publicizing DPW services.

The most troublesome aspect of DPW's operations is enforcement, according to Ms. Hoey. Certain violations are considered criminal and therefore DPW must rely on police intervention and cannot act on its own to punish violators and thereby deter further violations. Decriminalization will place enforcement in DPW's hands and hopefully will increase the District's effectiveness in providing public works services.

This article only outlines the highlights of Ms. Hoey's presentation. The speaker also fielded a number of difficult questions from the audience and recorded specific complaints to report to her staff. The Foggy Bottom Association thanks Ms. Hoey for her efforts and urges all neighbors to attend future Foggy Bottom Association meetings where we hope the speakers will be as capable and cooperative as Ms. Hoey was.

Crime Watch

I have recently received a number of complaints from readers who say that they keep seeing the same comments in my column concerning crime and the activities of residents within Foggy Bottom which contribute to crime... but they see little of so-called big crime. The truth of the matter is that we have very little "big crime" since our residents work very hard to ward it off. However, at the same time, they persist in making some foolish and dangerous mistakes.

For example, last night I found that one of my neighbors had been robbed while he was out at work. Upon checking I found that he had gone out leaving his apartment window open all day (in doing so he left the building with a severe security leak since his apartment was on the first floor of his building and almost at ground level). In fact, there was almost a duplicate robbery in the very same building last year which was publized to all tenants through this column. Officer Marty Clark spoke about leaving windows open and unattended when you are out, particularly when you live on the first floor of a building, when she conducted a meeting in his very building. Other police officials have constantly talked about leaving windows and doors open when you are away from the scene and the dire consequences that numbers of people have suffered due to this habit. Unfortunately now my neighbor is one of the statistics he was quoted. Do you, my reader, want to be the next? Take heed!

On Halloween, our streets were filled with people rushing off to the big party in Georgetown. I saw many of our residents passing by on their way and also noted that a number of the males had wallets or checkbooks sticking out of their back pockets. All of these kind souls were sitting ducks for the pickpockets who indeed worked their beat with the result that several wallets were stolen before the owners even noticed their loss. In the case of one group whose wallets were lifted near Pennsylvania House, the thieves were caught, identified, and the wallets returned sans money.

During the recent heat wave I saw a fairly large number of cars with women drivers on our streets with one thing in common... both front windows open for air and a handbag in plain view right under the open right front window.

Ladies, do you realize that if you have to stop at a stop light there is a good possibility that a nefarious hand could reach in, pick up the bag by its handle, and vanish into the crowd leaving you caught with your mouth open. Turn that handle under the bag, if you can stow your purse out of sight. An extra second taken to do so may save you hours of trying to replace credit cards etc. later. I have also seen some of you who are apparently coming home from the gym who put the little flight bag or shoe bag with its top open on the seat next to you as you drive through the Bottom. There in plain view nestling among the unmentionables is your wallet or a little case with your driver's license and a wad of bills. You can fall heir to the same theft.

Please be more careful and if you see any of the above stunts and know the other party, tell that person what could happen. That person may not realize the odds.

See you at the FBA and ANC meetings?

Call for Carolers

Are there any frustrated carolers out there? Anyone interested in an evening of caroling in mid-December call 337-5528 (evenings) the week of December 10.

USEFUL Addresses and Phone Numbers

FOGGY BOTTOM ASSOCIATION Executive Board 1984-1985

ELECTED OFFICERS:

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VICE PRESIDENT	Robert Brewster 2528 Queen Anne's Lane, NW	337-4956
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Julia Bond (Mrs. Niles) 2440 Virginia Ave., NW	296-2839
Robert Charles 908 25th Street, NW	965-2905
Isabella Geppert 2555 Pa. Ave. NW	296-0887
Morella Hansen 2415 Eye Street, NW	333-6382
Edward I. Schleifstein 2510 Virginia Ave., NW, #603N	337-1244
Grace Watson 2521 Queen Anne's Lane	965-0041

EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS:

Past President	Thomas V. Miller 1158 25th St., NW	293-9414
News Editor	Debbie Cahill-Zelinka 2407 Eye Street, NW	

[Zip code is 20037 unless otherwise noted.]

FOGGY BOTTOM WEST END ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 1984-85

Chair:	Goefrey (Jeff) Stamm (2A04) 2475 Virginia Avenue, NW 965-5139
Ralph Rosenbaum (2A01)	2201 L Street, NW 466-3809
Lou Rigdon (2A02)	1225 New Hampshire Ave., NW 785-4994
Maria Tyler (2A03)	949 25th Street, NW 337-7896
John A. Wilson	D.C. City Council City Hall Washington, DC 20004 724-8058

ANC Office	1920 G Street, NW Washington, DC 20006 659-0011
Steve Levy (2A05)	615 22nd Street, NW 333-7635
Jimmy Molinelli (2A06)	2150 F Street, NW 338-3318

Mayor Marion Barry
City Hall
Washington, DC 20004
727-6319

From the President

My recent sojourn on crutches was yet another reminder of how terrific it is to live in Foggy Bottom, and how I hope we'll keep striving to preserve and protect this neighborhood. The help (and more offers for help than I could utilize) again indicated to me that this is a neighborhood and there are a lot of good neighbors here who come through in a pinch. I was the recipient of rides to the doctor, later to work, grocery store runs, moving things

within my house which I could not handle, even taking the trash out! It was a collection of little things (and some not so little) that meant a lot. Thanks a bunch.

FBA's Vice President Bob Brewster has been nominated to serve on the D.C. Commission on Aging. It's a good match: the Commission got a doer, and Bob got a job that interests him. Can't beat that!

Happy Holidays, all!
Ellie Becker

November 1984

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Foggy Bottom News

The Foggy Bottom News is a publication of the Foggy Bottom Association. All editorial and other assistance is contributed on a volunteer basis by residents of the area.

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From the Bottom Up Puck
Local News Elizabeth Charette
All announcements, letters, articles, etc., welcome but must be typed **double spaced**. Please include an evening phone number. Send to:

FOGGY BOTTOM NEWS
% West End Library
24th & L Sts., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers. Their appearance here constitutes neither an endorsement nor official policy of the Foggy Bottom Association.

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Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Having been out of town for two years, I have not been able to follow every development in the Whitehurst Freeway study nor do I claim to know all the impacts of the latest freeway resolution adopted by the ANC on October 10. However, I am concerned about the way the ANC recently has handled this issue which, I believe, falls short of its usual high standards of openness and fairness.

For those who were not at the ANC's October 10 meeting, it passed a resolution of Commissioner Maria Tyler's expressing "approval of the basic approach" of a freeway proposal recently put forth by a Georgetown business group. The proposal calls for: (1) closing off access to the freeway at 25th and K Streets without necessarily creating a freeway tunnel, (2) building an entrance ramp to I-66 on the western edge of Rock Creek, and (3) moving the existing I-66 exit ramp from 26th and L Streets westward to Pennsylvania Avenue near Rock Creek and using the land freed up "to the maximum possible extent" for a park.

This was the first major resolution on the freeway since last spring, when the ANC expressed dissatisfaction with several options with similar features as well as with the no-build "Alternative A." The ANC presented the resolution to the city, in a cover letter to the Mayor on October 12, as one that could help build a "community consensus."

What disturbs me is that this new and important resolution was considered without the prior knowledge of a large part of the neighborhood, including people who had voiced concern about similar proposals in the past and who might be adversely affected by it if it is realized. Here is the story of the resolution, as I understand it.

The latest developments were discussed five days before the ANC meeting at an informal meeting held on October 5 at a private home in Foggy Bottom. Commissioner Tyler and two other ANC commissioners were present, as were some residents from south of K Street. No invitation had been extended to Commissioner Rigdon, who represents an area north of K Street that might be negatively affected by the resolution and who ultimately did not vote for it. Nor too, it seems, were any representatives invited from buildings from Commissioner Rigdon's district, such as the Westbridge, Knightsbridge Court, and 2501 M Street.

There was little or no advance warning that the October 10 ANC meeting would

consider a major freeway initiative. The Washington Post had just run a story leaking the city's decision in favor of the no-build option, leaving the impression that the matter was closed. The flyer for the ANC meeting, posted in most but not all corners of the neighborhood, said it would discuss Whitehurst Freeway "developments," a term the ANC generally uses when it is planning just to give an update. The ANC and its Transportation Committee chair, Commissioner Tyler, also apparently made no effort to formally notify condominium or tenants associations affected by the resolution that it would be considered. In the past, it has been standard ANC practice to notify interested parties of sensitive resolutions, even if the issue had been discussed before, and the ANC has actually re-voted on resolutions passed when no due notice had been given.

The atmosphere at the ANC meeting itself was less than ideal for a thoughtful consideration of the resolution by the public. ANC freeway spokesman Geoffrey Tyler gave a careful, detailed presentation of the proposal and fielded questions patiently and at length. But the topic came up late, few people present had examined the proposal in advance, few who had spoken out on the issue at previous meetings were present, and suggestions that a decision be postponed were brushed aside.

I spoke with Commissioner Tyler a day after the meeting and sought assurances that the various interested parties in this issue had been given prior notification of the resolution and had no problems with it. She declined to answer directly, saying that the issue was well known to all and that I should ask these parties myself.

I subsequently spoke with some of these people, who live in various buildings north of K Street, and they in fact expressed concerns with the resolution. These concerns include: that the proposal simply is not workable, that some of the nontunnel options it allows could create more noise at 25th and K Streets, that it might raise traffic and noise levels along Pennsylvania Avenue and M Street, and that there are no guarantees the hoped-for parkland near 26th Street would not be used for commercial development.

These concerns may or may not be justified and I may or may not share them. But the fact remains that various views continue to exist on this issue and that, as on any issue, they should continue to be solicited. Having served on and chaired the ANC, I know how difficult and time-consuming coordination can be. But it is well worth the effort to maintain the good will and high es-

teem that this ANC has always enjoyed in the neighborhood. And this, after all, translates into clout downtown.

Sincerely, John Nowick

* * *

Editor's Note: In a phone conversation with Mr. Nowick in late September regarding his desire to write an article about the Whitehurst Freeway I told him that Commissioner Tyler had a wealth of first hand knowledge on the subject and asked him to consult with her before writing the article. During that conversation I informed Mr. Nowick that a meeting had been scheduled for the following week to discuss the latest freeway developments and that it would be held at Commissioner Tyler's house. I suggested that he contact her for additional information. Several days later Mr. Nowick left a message at my home to the effect that he would not be writing an article about the Freeway for a while. Days later during a conversation with Commissioner Tyler I asked her if Mr. Nowick had ever contacted her regarding his desire to report on freeway developments. She said that he had not. Mr. Nowick lives on the North side of K Street in a building which directly overlooks the Freeway.

A response to Jon Nowick:

Although the ANC does try to notify interested parties of impending actions, that kind of extra notification will necessarily be minimal when events are moving very quickly, as they were in the instance Mr. Nowick faults. For residents who wish to influence the ANC's positions directly, there is simply no substitute for regular attendance at the monthly public meetings. Commissioners are elected by residents as their representatives, and they act for their constituents; given several years of public deliberation over Whitehurst Freeway issues, the concerns of the myriad special interests in the neighborhood are very well known to all Commissioners. As Chairman, I am troubled when any resident is disturbed about how the ANC is functioning, but in this case I believe it boils down to a matter of appearance rather than substance.

Geoff Stamm

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MINUTES

Continued from October issue

Advisory Neighborhood Commission: September 12, 1984, at St. Mary's Court, 725 24th Street, N.W.

Virginia Avenue median barrier: Mary Healy stated that the recent placing of a median barrier on the 2400 block of Virginia Avenue by the Department of Public Works, without consulting the ANC, has created a serious safety problem even worse than the poor conditions it was evidently designed to improve.

Marge Wheatley expressed her difficulty in exiting from Columbia Plaza parking garage because of the poor visibility created by the barriers.

Mel Ogden and John Clark also expressed their concern for the safety and appearance of the neighborhood because of these barriers.

Commissioner Levy moved a resolution asking the Department of Public Works to remove the barriers and study and recommend to the ANC other, more effective, ways of improving the safety of the area for pedestrians and vehicles. Commissioner Tyler added that the community has already asked for a comprehensive study of traffic patterns in Foggy Bottom to improve the situation, and this was reiterated in the resolution, which was seconded by Commissioner Rigdon and passed 5-0 (resolution I-3).

BZA application #14196 (continued operation of the 7-11 store at 912 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.): Franchisees Jim and Sue Burkey were present with their attorney, Jerry Moore III. A brief discussion ensued about the operation, and general satisfaction was expressed. However, the store is located in a sensitive area, and the general feeling was that a review would be needed at a later time to continue to protect the neighborhood. Commissioner Stamm moved a resolution in support of continuing the special exception for operation of the store for six years, which was seconded by Com-

missioner Rosenbaum, and passed 5-0 (resolution I-6).

Ward 2 Tenants Council: Commissioner Levy moved a resolution to award a grant of \$500 to the organization in recognition of the many services it has provided and continues to provide to tenants and to the ANC, relieving the ANC of the burden of providing some of these services; it was seconded by Commissioner Rosenbaum. Jenny Brake spoke in favor of the resolution and emphasized the important work done in the neighborhood by the group. It was passed 5-0 (resolution I-7).

Intersection of 23rd Street and Virginia Avenue: Commissioner Levy moved a resolution to ask the Department of Public Works to closely study this intersection to ameliorate the many traffic hazards for pedestrians and vehicles that must use the intersection, and he included several specific suggestions. It was seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, and passed 5-0 (resolution I-8).

Recruit staff: The Chair was authorized to recruit a new staff person, and typist as needed; moved by Commissioner Levy, seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, and passed 5-0 (resolution I-9).

Richard Price: Mr. Price was publicly thanked by the commission for the many hours he has put in as a volunteer to enter historic preservation data into the ANC's computer system.

Expenses approved: The following expenses were authorized and payment approved by the Commissioners: Ginn's (\$17.81—office supplies); Geoff Stamm (\$56.51—general reimbursements); Penn Press (\$50.21—copying); Maria Tyler (\$12.00—general reimbursements); Traceries (\$3644.20—historic preservation contract billing); C & P (\$68.15—phone bill).

Public announcements: Commissioner Stamm advised that he had been informed that the Whitehurst Freeway will be resurfaced during the weekends of September 22/23 and 29/30 as part of the Mayor's pothole repair program.

Volunteer Positions Available in Exciting Program

If you were asked for advice about how to settle a troubling dispute or how to resolve issues in a difficult divorce case, you might respond, like most people, "Go to court." However, there are many other ways to handle these disputes—many ways that are easier, less stressful, less time-consuming and less costly. Unfortunately, many people are not aware of these alternatives.

A new program is being launched by the D.C. Superior Court which will refer clients to organizations throughout the Washington metropolitan area that provide dispute resolution services. This program, the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Program, will direct citizens to the organization that is best equipped to help them resolve their particular dispute. Each client will talk privately with an Intake worker who will carefully assess his/her problem and recommend the most appropriate dispute resolution option available in the area.

The Multi-Door Program's Intake Center will open soon. It is hoped that a number of volunteers will be available to assist staff in handling all Intake functions. Volunteers should be good listeners and sensitive to the problems of others. People with training or experience in law-related fields, social sciences, social work and teaching are especially welcome.

The Intake Center will operate Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Volunteers must be available to work a minimum of 8 hours per week during the work day. Training will be provided by program staff.

The D.C. Superior Court's Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Program is expected to help large numbers of citizens find solutions to troubling problems. You can help. To ask for an Intake Specialist application, please call 727-1630.

These articles are being printed with the permission of their author, Toni Lee.

The Changing Landscape

Foggy Bottom's identity is a product of its natural topographical assets as they have been altered by man-made "improvements." Like the entire District of Columbia, Foggy Bottom's natural landscape served as the city planners' clay, moulded by Pierre Charles L'Enfant and his successors into a rich complex of radial and grid streets, high and low-rise buildings, green open space, monuments, and shoreline.

To the city's earliest planners, Foggy Bottom fell into that area between Tyber Creek (present day location of Constitution Avenue) and Rock Creek. They were faced with two prominent features within this section of the new capital city: the huge rock called the "Key of Keys" and, just to the north, the hill variously referred to as "Observatory Hill," "Camp Hill," and "Peter's Hill" (after Robert Peter, early proprietor of a section of Foggy Bottom known as "Mexico").

The Key of Keys protruded just at the shoreline of the Potomac River, halfway between 23rd and 25th Streets. This rock outcropping was of such height and length that it bestowed a picturesque element in the bucolic setting. It was considered to be the "greatest of all landing places." It was not surprising that it became the focus of the busy waterfront activities that early on gave the lowlands of Foggy Bottom a distinctively port-town flavor. This inviting rock was later used as a quarry. It became further disfigured by blasting activities which accompanied the construction of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal's connection with the City Canal (shaped out of Tyber Creek).

With the reclamation of the Potomac Flats in the last two decades of the nineteenth century a quarter of a mile of flat land separated the rock from the new Potomac River shoreline. By the end of the nineteenth century, this once prominent geological landmark was reduced to three small ledges, only a vestige of its former self. The site suffered the additional insult of being used as a trash dump. In 1896, an article in the *Washington Star* described the site as a "depression along the ledge of rocks" and harbored the hope that the "remnants of the ancient and historic rock" might be preserved.

Foggy Bottom's other natural landmark, Observatory Hill, enjoyed a brighter fate. The eminence, commanding a spectacular view of the Potomac River, the Virginia shore, and the circle of hills that ring the river-bottom city, was envisioned as a desirable location for a fort, a barracks, or a national university. Instead, the Naval installation and hospital occupied the site. They were factors in the concentration of the smart military set along residential F and G Streets in the nineteenth century. Fortunately, this topographical feature—hill and historical buildings—has been left intact despite the fast-moving changes that have so altered its immediate surroundings.

Stretching southward from Observatory Hill are the opulent green lands of West Potomac Park. The reclaimed Potomac Flats provided the man-made stage upon which smaller park designs were fashioned. Some of these designs, like the Lincoln Memorial and its Reflecting Pool, are formal set-pieces intended for promenading, while areas to their immediate north and south are left open for active sports. Although they fall into the jurisdiction of the National Capital Parks, these open spaces are also Foggy Bottom's very own neighborhood parks.

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Foggy Bottom's Riverfront Settlement

Before the Mall parklands were reclaimed from the Potomac Flats, the Potomac River and Rock Creek formed the southern and western boundaries of Foggy Bottom. A river-oriented settlement developed on the lowlands of the area, south of the more densely populated thoroughfares closest to Pennsylvania Avenue. In fact, according to the Boschke Topographical Map of the District of Columbia published in 1861, there were veritable open fields and woodlands between the density of Pennsylvania Avenue and the settlement that clung to the river's shoreline.

This riverfront area was only sparsely settled throughout much of the nineteenth century. Several streets were unimproved as late as the 1880's. Many of the squares contained only about three houses each. These buildings were frame, of modest proportions, and occupied by artisans, laborers, and sailors. An occasional warehouse and commercial building, such as the glass manufacturing plant established in 1809, were scattered throughout. The Van Ness House on the site of the present Pan American Building (completed in 1816 and demolished in 1907) stood as a major exception to the working class character of the area.

There were compensations for the residents. It was said that clay was so abundant that "when one wanted a house he made the bricks for it on the spot." The non-urban atmosphere was enhanced by luxurious vineyards, trees, and gardens that adjoined many homes. The groundbreaking in 1828 of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal with its route embracing part of the Foggy Bottom shoreline promised a new affluence in the linking of the resources of the West with the capital city.

Unlike the romantic stream of today, Rock Creek was once navigable as far north as K Street. Here in the 1790's, a "convenient and handsome stair landing" was built. This semicircular quarry-dressed stair offered a place for river travellers to alight. From here to the mouth of the Creek, the water was of sufficient depth to float sloops and schooners which carried wood, building and paving stones, and sand. Wharfs were sited along the banks of the Creek and southward along the shores of the Potomac to where the shoreline turned eastward just below Observatory Hill. The construction of the C&O Canal did away with the Rock Creek wharfs and the reclamation of the Flats in the late nineteenth century diminished the importance of the Potomac River wharfs.

Windmill Point was the name frequently given to mark the bend in the Potomac River shoreline at the extreme end of 26th Street. Before this area became part of the capital city, this corner of land was populated by wild swans, geese, and ducks who flew among wild celery. From the southern slope of Observatory Hill, fish could be seen in the clear water.

In the 1820's, Captain William Easby established a wharf and shipbuilding yard at this bend, and it was thereafter known as Easby's Point. A small settlement of tenant houses occupied by Easby's employees clustered about the wharf. Easby himself built his dwelling nearby. His daughter, Wilhelmine Easby-Smith, grew up here. In 1913, she recorded her personal recollections in a paper read before the Association of Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia.

In her recollections, Mrs. Easby-Smith recalled the picturesque qualities of the riverside settlement. She remembered that among her "pleasantest memories are those of the walks on that breezy, shady old towpath (from Easby's Point to 17th Street) on summer evenings..." She also lamented the disappearance of the ample gardens and orchards, the ship launchings from the Point, and the sounds that accompanied the canal activities.

To look at Foggy Bottom today, a viewer can see hardly any vestiges of this riverine life. In the reclamation process, the shoreline was extended farther out. Highways and high density development have replaced the small dwellings and commercial structures. One can not even hear the croaking of the frogs that gave the area its name: *Foggy Bottom*.

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Planning for the Renewal of Foggy Bottom

by Toni Lee

Foggy Bottom at mid-twentieth century appeared to stand on the cutting edge of two futures. One fate would lead to the rehabilitation of the many townhouses in the area. Georgetown served as a model for this type of renewal accomplished by private investment. Newcomers to Capitol Hill had initiated a similar renovation process by the early 1950's. The other prospect lay in the advantages of the area's central location. Large-scale development was the most likely result of this feature.

The National Housing Act of 1949 allowed for the Redevelopment Land Agency (first organized in 1946) to receive funds for "slum clearance and redevelopment." By 1955, in response to a request by citizens groups in Foggy Bottom, the RLA had formulated urban renewal goals for the area. In contrast with the massive clearance approach which characterized urban renewal planning in the southwest quadrant of the city, the RLA determined that "only a small amount of clearance will be required in Foggy Bottom." This less drastic renewal plan would "assure private investors of the stability of the area and encourage them to make a further investment in rehabilitation." Land values would be stabilized by the protection of the residential areas from depreciating commercial, mixed, and nonconforming uses. This kind of planning and coordinated action would thus create a permanently favorable environment for a neighborhood. In order for public funds to be used for the provision of neighborhood facilities and stable land values, the National Capital Planning Commission was required to adopt boundaries for the renewal area. Two areas were tentatively mapped out by 1956: Foggy Bottom urban renewal area was bounded by H Street, 24th Street, Pennsylvania Avenue, and 27th Street. The latter renewal area encompassed the university and the neighborhood from 19th Street west to 27th, excluding the Foggy Bottom renewal area.

In the process of formulating plans for these two urban renewal areas, a structural and family survey was conducted. Once the boundaries were established and the survey completed, it was expected that designation would bring Federal mortgage insurance, RLA's eminent domain powers, and other Federal programs that could assist with the rehabilitation upgrading of the area.

Active citizen participation in these proceedings came from the Foggy Bottom Restoration Association (predecessor to the Foggy Bottom Association), founded in May of 1955. The group sought adoption of the Foggy Bottom urban renewal plan. The association, described in the *Post* and *Star* as a "nonsegregated group," urged adoption of the plan based on the belief that private rehabilitation efforts had progressed as far as possible without the exercise of public powers and the availability of public monies.

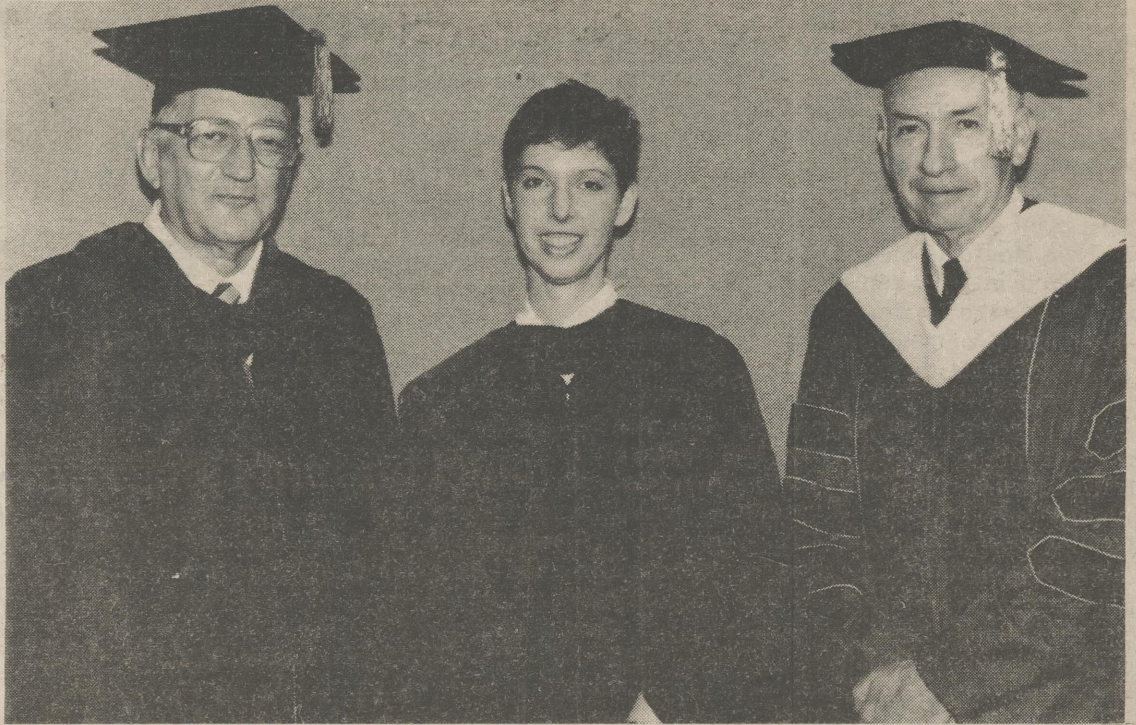
Threats to this hope for gradual rehabilitation were posed by commercial developers with large-scale buildings in mind. In 1955, the Potomac Plaza Corp. applied for a building permit to start the construction of the first phase of what would ultimately be a sizeable apartment building. People's Life Insurance Company was also planning a large office building. It appeared that Foggy Bottom was "literally seething with private building and rebuilding efforts" such that a long-term planning project stretched over a period of several years would kill off these enterprises.

George Washington University was included in a separate renewal area partially in response to the need to plan for the route of the Inner Loop Freeway which was charted to run along 23rd Street. RLA planners felt it necessary that the "entire surrounding area (adjacent to the Freeway) come within an integrated plan." The university itself offered a second reason for the renewal area: in order to expand without hindrance, the university "must be aided by land use control of its surroundings." This project was further justified on the basis of the several similar redevelopment and renewal projects being planned across the country to assist with the development of "attractive campuses and appropriate surrounding neighborhoods."

While the residents' sympathies supported an urban renewal plan for the Foggy Bottom area, they were opposed to the designation of the university area. An urban renewal designation would allow the RLA to use its powers of eminent domain to assemble parcels of land, clear the land, and sell the cleared land to the university as the redeveloper. This redevelopment process would give the University free rein to its expansion efforts.

Upon closer examination, the buildings within the proposed university renewal area were in relatively good condition. Residents urged RLA not to designate the university area, stating that the agency should concentrate its efforts on slums and blighted areas. The university plan was eventually dropped.

As for the Foggy Bottom renewal area, the private developers mounted an effective campaign to prevent its formal designation. The prices of land were increasing at a rapid rate, making the rationale of renewal plans to deal with urban disinvestment less



MARGARET ROSE SILVERBERG, center, of northwest 25th Street, is shown with Associate Dean of the George Washington University National Law Center E.A. Potts, left, and GW President Lloyd H. Elliott, right, before the annual commencement of the law center during the summer. She received the degree of Juris Doctor (With Highest Honors) and the United States Law Week Award during the ceremony. The award is given each year to an outstanding senior law student.

convincing. Representatives of the large development projects urged the NCPC to keep its hands off the area. The anticipated renewal designation was further thwarted by plans for an auditorium and national cultural center (later the Kennedy Center), new street and highway networks, and a new bridge across the Potomac. Over a period of several years, the Foggy Bottom renewal area was reduced to avoid these large scale projects.

In the end, the two urban renewal plans for Foggy Bottom shrank into a 18.2 acre area which accommodated Columbia Plaza. This piece of land had previously been divided into small lots. The urban renewal designation allowed for all land in this small project area to be assembled, a feat that private interests had been unable to achieve. A unified development was therefore made possible. Columbia Plaza was conceived as a "packaged living" complex, primarily for residential use, but with a mix of shops and office facilities sufficient to produce a round-the-clock population.


The homeowners who bought townhouses in Foggy Bottom for rehabilitation found themselves in the unhappy position of being followed by a stream of corporate developers ready to cash in on the central location of the area and the empty lots left by the removal of the gas tanks and local industries. In 1956, a resident noted the lack of a plan for orderly development of the area, a situation that would result in the predominance of the commercializing influence. This unchecked growth would reestablish "another kind of blight just as the area was taking a new lease on life." The Foggy Bottom we know today represents a compromise between the hopes of the rehabilitation pioneers and those of the big commercial interests.

(This article, prepared from newspaper accounts and annual reports on deposit with the D.C. Office of Housing and Community Development, is the last in the series of history articles that was initiated in March of 1977.)

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—ANNOUNCEMENTS—

NOTES
FROM MARY HEALY

The Holiday Season is coming up and good things are in the offing for all good little children (that's all of us) in Foggy Bottom:

Mayor Marion Barry is holding his Annual Neighborhood Beautification Awards Ceremony on December 5, at 10:30 AM, in the Auditorium of the University of the District of Columbia. Awards will be given for beautification efforts, and reduction in litter efforts, to recipients throughout the City—residents and businesses will receive the awards, as well as schools, hospitals, hotels and the like. Foggy Bottom, deservedly so, is receiving a whole bunch!! For those of you who are interested, and I hope you all are,

you are invited to attend the Ceremony. After the Ceremony there will be a Reception at which you can congratulate our Awardees. RSVP to Dorothy McClain on 576-7387 as soon as you read this; the grace period has been extended for you.

Santa Claus is coming to town. On December 19 at approximately 5:15 Columbia Hospital for Women Medical Center will hold its now traditional Christmas Tree Lighting Party for the Foggy Bottom Community. We're all invited to share in the good cheer of this event so let's all go and greet Santa as he rolls in on a hospital bed!!! RSVP to Liz McAllister on 293-2048.

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of World Health

The American Association for World Health seeks volunteers to:

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2. Help update and expand our mailing lists and type mailing labels and envelopes, using either a computer terminal or typewriter.
3. Make telephone calls to health agencies and other voluntary organization.
3. Research and write short articles of a non-technical nature.

Hours are flexible; some work may be done at home. Please call 861-4322 for further information.

Our Association, headquartered in Foggy Bottom at 2121 Virginia Avenue, informs the American public about international health issues and programs and serves as the U.S. Committee for the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization. For further information, please call 861-4322 during business hours.

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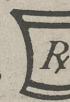
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Here is your chance to voice your opinion about the Georgetown Waterfront Park. Send your completed form promptly (early in December) to Manus J. Fish, Regional Director, National Capital Region, National Park Service,

1100 Ohio Drive, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20242.

At the meeting at which this questionnaire was given out, there was some discussion of decreasing the parking area at Thompson's Boat House; there was no discussion of the

area east of Rock Creek Parkway, which Foggy Bottom residents feel should be considered as a part of this whole discussion of Georgetown Waterfront Park and the Whitehurst Freeway plans.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE GEORGETOWN WATERFRONT PARK Public Preference Questionnaire

Please help plan the Georgetown Waterfront Park. Your replies will guide the study team in its work. This is your opportunity to state your views and contribute your opinions.

General Planning Objectives	Remarks
1. Should the park contain major facilities (band shell, restaurant, parking, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Remarks: _____
2. Should the park optimize its riverfront location? (docks, piers, boat facilities)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Remarks: _____
3. Should there be provisions for linkages from parkland to the development areas? (pedestrian, bike, visual, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Remarks: _____
4. Do you think it important to maintain views of the river from north/south streets?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Remarks: _____
5. Should there be variation in the bulkhead design? (steps, height variation, materials, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Remarks: _____
6. What activities would you like to see in the park?	_____

SPECIFIC DESIGN OBJECTIVES

1. Should the Whitehurst Freeway be screened from river views?	_____
2. Should the park contain extensive lighting?	_____
3. Should shoreline continuity be emphasized?	_____
4. Should there be short-term docking facilities for access to land-based attractions?	_____
5. Should there be floating restaurants and associated parking?	_____
6. Should there be some public multi-use pavilion-like facility in the park?	_____
7. Should better access be provided from the C&O Canal and Rock Creek to the Waterfront Park?	_____
8. Should vehicle parking be allowed in the park?	_____
9. Should parking be allowed on K Street?	_____
10. Should biking be prohibited on the C&O Canal Towpath in the Georgetown sector during busy periods?	_____
11. Should a bike path be provided within the park?	_____
12. What do you envisage for the Thompson Boat Center/Tidelock area?	_____
13. To fully restore the Tidelock area and make it operational, the restoration of the historic lift dam at the confluence of Rock Creek and the Potomac River would be necessary to raise the water appropriately. Is this a good idea?	_____
14. There is a need for a visitor contact facility for the C&O Canal which would contain interpretive functions, ticket sales, restrooms, staff offices, etc. Should the Park Service acquire an existing historic structure or build a new facility on existing parklands?	_____
15. Should the C&O Canal Towpath be lighted?	_____
16. How would you like to see the aqueduct area improved?	_____
17. How should the vagrancy problem be best addressed?	_____
18. The C&O Canal Towpath between Rock Creek and 31st Street is bricked. The current policy is for the towpath to remain crushed compacted gravel west of 31st Street. Do you agree with this?	_____
Other Remarks and Comments:	_____

Happy Holidays from the Staff at the Foggy Bottom News

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